to all the State Governments in September, 1987 for information and guidance. No specific, complete proposal has been received from any of the State Governments, in consultation with the Chief Justice of the concern High Court, for establishment of benches of High Courts away from their principal seats. In view of this, it is not possible for the Central Government to take further action in the matter.

[English]

Excise Duty Evasion by Tobacco Manufacturers

1213. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Excise officials have busted a racket in excise duty evasion by chewing tobacco manufacturers worth over Rs. 30 crore;

(b) if so, the modus operandi of evasion of excise duty;

(c) the steps taken to recover the same; and

(d) the measures taken to stop this racket of excise evasion by these chewing tobacco manufacturers?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (d). Acting on intelligence, premises of certain manufacturers of chewing tobacco were raided by Central Excise Officers of Delhi Commissionerate.

Investigations conducted revealed that these manufacturers were manufacturing and removing the preparations of chewing tobacco without payment of duty and without obtaining Central Excise Registration. The duty evaded is estimated to the tune of Rs. 35 crores.

Recovery proceedings can be initiated only after adjudication in accordance with provisions of Central Excise Act and the Rules made thereunder.

Regarding the measures to stop evasion, preventive checks have been intensified including increased surveillance on the activity of chewing tobacco manufacturers.

Setting up of EOUs in Orissa

1214. SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any proposal to set up cent percent Export Oriented Units in Orissa; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time by which these units are likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b). 46 proposals have been approved for setting up Export Oriented Units in Orissa out of which eight units are already operational. Seven units are presently in various stages of implementation and two proposals are under consideration of the Government.

Merger of Insurance Schemes

1215. SHRI SHANTILAL PARSOTAMDAS PATEL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to merge various insurance schemes like Hut Insurance Scheme, Personal Accident Insurance Scheme, Social Security Scheme etc. of General Insurance Corporation; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the efforts being made to ensure that these schemes cover all those persons who live below the poverty line?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). Hut Insurance Scheme is intended to provide relief to the poor families in rural areas, whose annual income from all sources does not exceed Rs.4,800/-, when their huts and belongings in the huts get destroyed by the fire. The Personal Accident Social Security Scheme for poor families (PASS) covers, all earning members, both in urban and rural areas, in the age group of 18 to 60 years whose total family income from all sources does not exceed Rs.7.200/- per annum, against accidental deaths. As the purpose of the covers, and the target groups covered are different under the two schemes, no proposal is under consideration of the Govt. to merge them into a single scheme.

Losses in HMT

1216. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the losses of the Hindustan Machine tools has been increasing day by day;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the loses suffered by HMT during each of the last three years;

(c) the factors responsible for such losses; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to make the HMT out of red?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b). The losses incurred by HMT during the last three years are as under:

Year	Rs. in cr.
1993-94	119.26
1994-95	79.20
1995-96	55.89

(c) The factors responsible for losses in HMT include stiff competition, product obsolecence and high overheads etc.

(d) HMT has taken steps to modernise its operations and improve the functioning of its weaker units. The steps taken include; locating joint venture partners for technology transfer, financial investments, modernisation etc.

Export of Foodgrains

1217. SHRI SURESH PRABHU :
SHRI TARIQ ANWAR :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some countries have rejected the Indian foodgrains particularly wheat exported to them;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps by the Government to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b). A small number of consignment of wheat from India were detained by the Turkish, Moroccon and Polish authorities as they were found to be infected by Tilletia Indica (Karnal Bunt) fungus.

(c) Inspection of wheat for issuing Phytosanitary Certificate at the time of export for quarantine purposes is being carried out by the Directorate of Plant Protection and Quarantine, Ministry of Agriculture or the Directors of State Agriculture authorised for this purpose by the Directorate of Plant Protection Quarantine and Storage.

Agricultural Export

1218. SHRI S.D.N.R. WADIYAR : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the tremendous potential available in Karnataka to increase agricultural export;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to create proper infrastructural facilities in order to facilitate agricultural export from the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BULLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c). Rice, spices, floricultural products, fresh fruits and vegetables, cashew, sugar and tobacco are the main agricultural products produced in Karnataka which offer export potential. Most of these products have been identified as "Extreme Focus" products for achieving a quantum jump in exports.

Under a scheme for Development of Infrastructure in all States including Karnataka, financial assistance is being provided to eligible exporters for (i) purchase of specialised transport units; (ii) establishments of pre-cooling facilities; (iii) setting up of mechanised post-harvest handling facilities and sheds for grading, sorting, quality control and packaging; (iv) establishing vapour heat treatment/fumigation/screening machines for exports; and (v) establishing cold stores at airports/seaports for export purposes.

Coal based Industries

1219. SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL :
SHRI VIJAY PATEL :

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have received requests from the various State Governments for setting up of coal industries in their respective States, during the years 1995-96 and 1996-97;

(b) if so, the number of such proposals received, State-wise; and

(c) the number of projects sanctioned so far, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

PF Money Invested in Public Sector

1220. SHRI D.P. YADAV : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have issued guidelines for investment of 30 percent amount belonging to Provident Found in Public Sector bonds;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure that the above amount is not misused?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). The non-Government Provident Funds prior to 1-10-96 were required to invest inter alia, 30% of their net accretion in bonds/securities of "Public Financial Institutions" as specified under Section 4(a) of Companies Act, "Public Sector Companies" as defined in Section 2(36A) of the Income Tax Act, 1961 or certificates of deposit issued by a Public Sector Bank. With effect from 1-10-96 the percentage has been increased to 40%. These are debt instruments and the Funds will receive the prescribed interest periodically.

(c) The Public Sector Companies are owned and controlled by Government and they raise funds for meeting expenditure on approved schemes.